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NAVY MEDICINE IN FOCUS

Many Views with One Vision

BY VJOHNSON – NOVEMBER 7, 2014

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Naval Hospital Bremerton's (NHB) Radiology Department was acknowledged for the many contributions of radiology technicians during National Radiologic Technology Week which commenced this week.



With 'Many Views with One Vision' as the theme for Radiologic Tech Week, Naval Hospital Bremerton's Radiology Department lead Nuclear Medicine technician Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Vincent Kucera explains the state of the art equipment in Nuclear Medicine that combines single photon emission computer tomography (SPECT), computer tomography (CT) and an independent fully diagnostic CT scanner that completely enhances patient centered care by being able to digitally superimpose nuclear medicine and CT images to allow for precise anatomic localization of disease processes. (Photo by Douglas H Stutz, NHB Public Affairs).

The week brought attention to the important role of medical imaging and radiation therapy that the 49 radiology staff professionals – five officers, 24 enlisted, 16 civilians and four students – bring to patient care and health care safety.

The American Society of Radiologic Technologists theme for this year was 'Many Views with One Vision,' and Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Benjamin Larson, leading petty officer of NHB's Radiology Department, said of those views can't be understated and each vision is the basis of a diagnosis in many medical situations.

"Support from Radiology Department is absolutely vital to the health and well being of our patients. In many cases our services are life saving or have a significant positive impact on patient outcomes. The Radiology Department is geared towards providing the most efficient radiological health care and optimal imaging services for patients to receive quality services that will assist health care providers in determining the best course of action to improve and/or sustain the health and vitality for all of our patients," said Larson, a radiology technologist for ten years.

That collective views come from the seven divisions that make up Radiology Department; Computed Tomography (CT), Diagnostic Radiography/Fluoroscopic Imaging, Mammography/Breast Imaging, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Nuclear Medicine, Radiation Health and Ultrasound.

"The Radiology Department provides medical imaging services to the majority of the hospital, including the Urgent



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Care Center, Operating Rooms, Labor and Delivery, MS5 Inpatient Ward, Intensive Care Unit, Orthopedics, Branch Health Clinics Bangor and Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. Our services are provided 24/7, including weekends and holidays," Larson said.

According to Cmdr. Mark M. Morton, Radiology Department head, the active duty and civilian radiology technologists at NHB and Branch Health Clinics at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Naval Base Kitsap – Bangor and Naval Station Everett routinely handle radiology examinations, including 43,097 examinations in Fiscal Year 2014.

These valuable technologists provide life saving diagnostic services around the clock in direct support of patient care," said Morton. There are alsosub-divisions found within radiology that require specialty skills, training, and certifications that are associated with each area in order to provide the best care in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the Joint Commission, the American Registry of Radiological Technologists, the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board and the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

"NHB has some of the brightest and highly motivated radiology technologists available. On their own initiative, three of NHB's radiology technologists attained national certifications in computed tomography in fiscal year '14, one is closing in on a mammography certification and one maintained dual certification in radiology and nuclear medicine. This remarkable professional drive is key to NHB's success, because we routinely call upon our technologists to cross train and become proficient in multiple imaging sections, for example, x-ray, CT, mammography and fluoroscopy, in order to meet the demand for our services," explained Morton.

Morton also attests that NHB's successful implementation of new SPECT/CT and CT scanners in FY14, two enormous projects collectively costing more than \$2.5 million, was in large part due to the versatility and dedication of the technologists who worked diligently to become qualified to independently and safely operate the new units in a timely fashion.

"It was their efforts that allowed us to continue the high quality medical imaging services that our healthcare providers and patients enjoy. We are taking this week to recognize the vital role that our radiology technologists have in the delivery of exceptional patient-centered care," Morton said.

"Our job is all about customer service; but it goes beyond more than just providing the services that we have to offer. Instead, sometimes a patient needs to know that you really do care about them. I would have to say that the most important aspect (of my job) is being an attentive listener, regardless of the reason(s) that a patient is there for. Our patients are our family. We want them to feel safe and secure in the knowledge that we are there for them at all times," said Larson, adding that it's gratifying to be able to help patients and knowing that they can make a difference in their patient's lives for the better.

The most common form of support provided by NHB's Radiology Department is with an x-ray, a type of photographic process done with electromagnetic radiation. An x-ray machine sends individual x-ray particles through the body and the images are recorded on a computer or film. Diagnostic radiography uses x-rays passing through the body to create a 2-D image that allows the radiologist and health care provider to see a general image of the anatomy in order to determine if there are any clues about a medical condition that may or may not exist.

The MRI utilizes a strong superconducting magnet and radiofrequency coils to influence the protons that are found throughout our bodies. Specific tissue types and pathologic processes respond differently in the MRI environment, which allows the radiologist to then make a diagnosis and assist the healthcare provider in developing an appropriate treatment plan.

The CT is a diagnostic tool that utilizes x-rays passing through the patient to produce contiguous 2-D slab images. As a result, the fine details of anatomical structures can be visualized in slices of varying thickness. Afterwards, a 3-D reconstruction of the cross-sectional anatomy allows the technicians to view a rotating model of the internal organs and skeletal system, which enhances understanding of the patient's condition without having to expose the patient to additional radiation. "This is an essential part of cancer detection," noted Larson.

Nuclear Medicine delivers radiopharmaceuticals internal to the patient and images are made by detecting the radiation that is emitted from the patient. This shows the staff where in the body that the radioactive substances are accumulating, which helps us study the functionality of the internal organs, to detect cancer and to look for any other abnormalities. This service offers diagnostic examinations and therapeutic treatments.

"Another key component to the Radiology Department are the radiation health technicians who are responsible for ensuring that our entire staff are properly wearing their Thermoluminescent Dosimeter (TLD) devices in order to document the amount of radiation that each technologist and radiologist receives throughout their career. Their department helps maintain the accuracy and accountability of each member's radiation exposure levels," Larson said.

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Geoffrey Sims is a radiation health technician who is seemingly always on the go, handling such responsibilities as radiation monitor, radiation surveys, gas and liquid analyses with knowledge of the medical aspects relating to personnel exposed to ionizing radiation. Along with Hospitalman Apprentice David Stott and Hospitalman Andre Stovall, Sims also directs and administers NHB's personnel dosimetry program and

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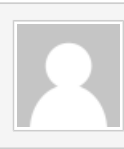
maintains radiation exposure records as part of the health records.

“Our motto is to ‘trust but verify.’ Helping to maintain the safety of our staff is something we do as effectively and efficiently as possible. There is no second guessing in our jobs. I love my job and think that we have a great team here at NHB. Couldn’t ask for a better division officer in Lt. Cmdr. (Jesse) Puryear who really knows his stuff. I’ve also heard that NHB is one of the best in respects to radiation safety. This really is a great place to work. There is proper guidance, shared knowledge and strong support in our department,” said Sims.

Lt. Cmdr. Joel McFarland, Radiology assistant department head, praised his entire staff, underscoring a common theme of appreciation for everyone on the staff.

“I feel very fortunate to be part of such a dedicated, hard-working, and patient-focused Radiology Department. Our staff truly goes the extra mile to make sure that every exam is done right and every patient is taken care of, with exams ranging literally from head to toe. We pride ourselves on patient-centered care – rather than reflexively just completing every exam requested, we speak with every patient and review every request to ensure that every patient is getting the best imaging to address their health care needs. Without our dedicated, professional staff of radiology technologists, our department would be dead in the water,” stated McFarland.

The weekly observation also coincides with the anniversary of the x-ray discovery by German Physicist Dr. Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen on Nov. 8, 1895. Roentgen would later win the Nobel Prize in 1901 for his work in the fields of x-ray technology.



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